

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4774

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: ROKG ATTITUDE ON CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

SUMMARY: ROKG IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER NIX/FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS. FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED ME IN TO EXPRESS THIS CONCERN AND SEEK DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANCE TO COUNTER UNFAVORABLE COMMENT ON KOREAN AFFAIRS THAT MAY DEVELOP IN COMMITTEE HEARINGS.

1. FOREIGN MINISTER KIM DONG JO CALLED ME IN JULY 23. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED AT THE PROSPECT OF UPCOMING SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN KOREA AND READ TO ME THE FOLLOWING MEMORANDU. QUOTE

WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSED HEARING TO BEGIN ON 30TH JULY ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA BY THE SUBCOMMITTEES ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS AND ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS OF THE U.S. HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, IT IS HOPED THAT THE HEARING, IF HELD AS PLANNED, BE CONDUCTED IN A FAIR AND BALANCED MANNER TO HAVE ALL SIDES OF VIEWS EQUALLY HEARD.

IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WILL BE
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REPRESENTED AT THE HEARING BY EITHER MR. ARTHUR W. HUMMEL, JR.

OR MR. RICHARD L. SNEIDER, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARIES FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, WHO UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE THE KEENEST INSIGHT INTO THE KOREAN AFFAIRS.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT THROUGH THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WOULD MAKE A REPRESENTATION OF ITS OWN VIEWS AT THE HEARING IN AS CLEAR TERMS AS POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY ON THOSE PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA AND SECTION 32 OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1973.

AS REGARDS THE QUESTIONS RELATING TO SECTION 32 OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT, WE ARE OF THE VIEW THAT THE SECTION IN QUESTION IS IN NO WAY APPLICABLE IN CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. THE ROK GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PRACTICE EITHER THE INTERNMENT OR IMPRISONMENT OF ITS OWN CITIZENS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. THOSE PERSONS NOW ON TRIAL BY THE MILITARY COURTS ARE UNDER INDICTMENT FOR CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE INTERNAL LAWS OF THE REPUBLIC.

WE ARE AWARE OF THE CRITICISM BEING VOICED BY SOME QUARTERS IN THE UNITED STATES ON THE ALLEGED EXERCISE OF RESTRICTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA. THE KIND OF CHARGES ARE NOT TRUE. IT HAS BEEN AND STILL IS THE POLICY OF THE ROK GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO SAFEGUARD THE INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS OF ITS CITIZENS DULY GUARANTEED BY THE REPUBLIC'S CONSTITUTION.

IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU TO DO WHATEVER YOU CAN, INCLUDING SUBMISSION OF APPROPRIATE REPORTS TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, SO THAT THE PROPOSED HEARINGS ON KOREA WILL NOT CAUSE UNDUE ADVERSE PUBLICITY TO KOREA OR GIVE RISE TO ANY ILL EFFECT UPON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. UNQUOTE

2. I TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT, AS HE WELL KNEW FROM HIS PREVIOUS SERVICE IN WASHINGTON, THE CONGRESS WOULD HOLD SUCH HEARINGS AS IT FELT WERE NECESSARY FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ITS LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS. IN TURN THE DEPARTMENT WOULD PROVIDE TESTIMONY IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE. IN SO DOING THE DEPARTMENT WOULD PRESENT THE FACTS AS THEY ARE. AS
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HE WILL HAVE NOTED, THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN QUITE CIRCUMSPECT WITH REGARD TO ITS COMMENTS REGARDING THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF KOREA AND I WOULD EXPECT IT TO CONTINUE TO BE SO. HOWEVER, DEPARTMENTAL WITNESSES WOULD HAVE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS OF CONGRESS ABOUT EVENTS IN KOREA. HOW THE HEARINGS WOULD DEVELOP REMAINS TO BE SEEN BUT HE COULD BE ASSURED BOTH MY OWN REPORTS TO WASHINGTON AND THE DEPARTMENT'S PRESENTATION

WOULD BE BASED UPON THE BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US. HE COULD ALSO BE SURE WE HAD NO INTEREST IN INVOLVING OURSELVES IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF KOREA BUT WE WOULD HAVE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS. AS TO HIS REQUEST THAT THE HEARINGS NOT CAUSE UNDUE ADVERSE PUBLICITY TO KOREA, I COULD GIVE HIM NO ASSURANCES IN THAT REGARD. WE WOULD HAVE TO SEE HOW CIRCUMSTANCES DEVELOPED.

3. HE ASKED IF THE CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS COULD BE CONSTRUED AS INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF KOREA. I REPLIED THAT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES HAD A RIGHT TO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH WHATEVER WAS RELATED TO U. S. LEGISLATION. AS HE KNEW, CONGRESS APPROPRIATED FUNDS FOR OUR PROGRAMS IN KOREA AND IT HAD THE RIGHT TO CONCERN ITSELF IN ANY WAY IT CHOSE WITHIN ITS LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES. I SUGGESTED TO HIM THAT IT WOULD NOT BE WISE FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO PUBLICLY QUESTION THE RIGHT OF CONGRESS TO INQUIRE INTO MATTERS DIRECTLY RELATED TO LEGISLATION GOVERNING U. S. ACTIVITIES. FOREIGN MINISTER DROPPED THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT WITHOUT FURTHER COMMENT.

4. KIM SAID ROKG WAS EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF HAVING FRIENDLY WITNESSES BEFORE THE COMMITTEE TO COUNTER UNFAVORABLE TESTIMONY. I TOLD HIM THIS HAD BETTER BE DISCUSSED WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND THROUGH APPROPRIATE CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN WASHINGTON. THERE WAS SOME QUESTION IN THE DEPARTMENT AS TO WHETHER IT MAY NOT BE UNPRODUCTIVE TO PURSUE SUCH A COURSE. HE SAID ROKG WAS THINKING OF ASKING PROFESSOR RICHARD WALKER OF SOUTH CAROLINA UNIVERSITY TO TAKE ON SUCH A TASK. PROFESSOR WALKER WAS FAMILIAR WITH KOREAN AFFAIRS AND WOULD BE COMING HERE FOR A CURRENT BRIEFING. HE WOULD THEN GO TO WASHINGTON AND BE AVAILABLE IF IT IS DECIDED
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TO SEEK TO PRESENT A FRIENDLY WITNESS. (DIXIE WALKER'S NAME AS A POTENTIAL WITNESS CAME UP IN MY DISCUSSION WITH HAHM PYONG CHOON LATE LAST WEEK.)

5. I TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER I WOULD FORWARD HIS MEMORANDUM TO THE DEPARTMENT BUT HE MUST UNDERSTAND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS WELL KNOWN AND THAT TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE VIEWS. WHILE THE DEPARTMENT HAS NO INTENTION OF DELIBERATELY EMBARRASSING THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT, THE COMMITTEE WILL PURSUE ITS LEGITIMATE PURPOSES AS IT SEES FIT. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD BUT WAS HOPEFUL WE COULD REASSURE THE COMMITTEE. AMBASSADOR HAHM WOULD BE SEEKING CONTACT WITH FRIENDLY CONGRESSMEN TO ENLIST THEIR SUPPORT IN THIS EFFORT ALSO.

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